

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

In accordance with the present invention, there are provided nucleic acids encoding human NMDA receptor protein subunits and the proteins encoded thereby. The NMDA receptor subunits of the invention comprise components of NMDA receptors that have cation-selective channels and bind glutamate and NMDA. In one aspect of the invention, the nucleic acids encode NMDAR1 and NMDAR2 subunits of human NMDA receptors. In a preferred embodiment, the invention nucleic acids encode NMDAR1, NMDAR2A, NMDAR2B, NMDAR2C and NMDAR2D subunits of human NMDA receptors. In addition to being useful for the production of NMDA receptor subunit proteins, these nucleic acids are also useful as probes, thus enabling those skilled in the art, without undue experimentation, to identify and isolate related human receptor subunits. Functional glutamate receptors can be assembled, in accordance with the present invention, from a plurality of one type of NMDA receptor subunit protein (homomeric) or from a mixture of two or more types of subunit proteins (heteromeric). In addition to disclosing novel NMDA receptor protein subunits, the present invention also comprises methods for using such receptor subunits to identify and characterize compounds which affect the function of such receptors, e.g., agonists, antagonists, and modulators of glutamate receptor function. The invention also comprises methods for determining whether unknown protein(s) are functional as NMDA receptor subunits.